

# Joint Declaration on the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA)

We, the Leaders of the Western Balkans Six are meeting in Tirana on 16 October 2023, in the framework of the Berlin Summit;

Taking into consideration the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, recently launched by the President of the European Commission, and its particular focus on the necessity to bringing the region closer the Single Market;

Deeply convinced of the need for furthering the close cooperation of WB6 with the EU on the basis of mutual respect, trust, understanding, good-neighborliness and mutual respect for their interests and benefit of their citizens.

Reaffirming and strengthening relations and promoting continuous cooperation in the fields of mutual interest, in particular with a focus on the European path;

Taking into account the need to deepen cooperation in the area of financial markets in the Western Balkans Six, in the context of implementation of Common Regional Market;

Welcoming further progress in developing regional cooperation including through the Berlin Process;

Based on the European Commission's communication endorsed by the Council of Europe, "Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans" (2020) which proposes changes to reinvigorate the process allowing closer integration with the European Union, work for accelerated integration and "phasing -in" to individual EU policies, the EU market and EU programs, while ensuring a level playing field;

Recognising that establishing a modern payments infrastructure will facilitate cheaper, faster, safer, interoperable payments within the region and with the EU;

Noting the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) as a regulatory initiative facilitate cross-border cashless payments where euro is used, by harmonizing payment processing and allowing people doing business across borders in euros, with the same ease as domestic transactions within the members of SEPA.

**We express our interest to continuing and enhancing our political and technical collaboration to advance with the fulfilment of the SEPA requirements and join SEPA, in the upcoming year.**